



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE JUDICIAL AND MYSTICAL IDEA OF RELIGION

AN EXPOSITION OF ROM. 3:24 AND GAL. 2:20

PROFESSOR FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE
Meadville Theological Seminary

Romans 3:24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 2:20. I live and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

One passage would be called forensic legalism, the other is mystical. The theologians have obtained from them different elements of doctrine; but shall we think that Paul ever consciously analyzed his passionate piety and found in it a compound of ideas? Works on dogmatics have expounded this matter with many careful definitions abstract in form, and have given delicate, logical adjustment of discriminated elements, showing the order of justification and sanctification, the relation of imputed and inherent righteousness. The effort to comprehend these discussions is an intellectual exercise for which many devout and thoughtful men today, as they confess, have lost feeling and aptitude. The modern historical analysis in works on New Testament theology is a scientific improvement, but it seems often to unravel the mind of Paul without conveying the thrill and throb of his heart. The analysis exhibits a complex idea with various elements and various relations. Justification is dissected into forensic acquittal and the ethical meaning of making righteous. Faith itself is not one but many. It has a scale of meanings from mere belief to mystical personal union. Science is promoted by all this analysis, but there is a danger that the idea may die under the analysis. Something in Paul's soul fused all these various elements and aspects into unity and made the unity almost wildly alive. What is this accompaniment, this vital principle, which we tend to lose in the theological treatment? It is Paul's sense of the fact that Jesus loved him. The problems raised by Paul and Luther and Augustine are valid intellectual

problems, but they are problems raised by the effort to express in terms of various historical situations of thought the one great unanalyzed mystery which cannot be adequately or completely expressed in any terms of thought, the mystery of friendship, of spiritual communion between persons. Paul expresses his profound experience in relation to Jewish jurisprudential modes of thought and again in terms that have totally different analogies. It seems to me that these diverse expressions are easily fused and are both eminently natural when we read them, as simple untheological piety has often read them, as the utterance of friendship, of a spiritual personal relationship which can be interpreted by any pure and high experience of human love.

I should be thrilled by the discovery of a perfect man, but how ineffably more would it affect me if I found such a living and present ideal to be my friend. Let me suppose him such a friend that he would give up place, possession, life itself, in order to help me be the good thing I meant to be. Let me suppose that until I met him I had vainly sought to quell the rebellions of a passionate nature. Anger, resentment, hate, sensuous craving were tyrannies over me, however much I, in my better self, hated them. I experienced struggle, failure, defeat, self-condemnation. I numbered up my deeds and found that a perfect rectitude must condemn me, as I condemned myself. I mourned over the warfare of impulse in which I had been hurled to and fro from good deeds to bad deeds.

But then, my friend came. He was stainless, absolutely free from warfare, and he was all generosity, sweetness and love. Frail as I was, he loved me and gave up everything to help me. He was not simply an ideal for my admiration. The magic spell and power of friendship was on me. I was lifted up into a new heart, a new being. The noble image of his character filled my soul and drove out all solicitations of evil. I could not lust or hate, for this was excluded when his inward companionship pervaded my heart. He was the very power of God in me. I seemed to be living his life. I was a new creature—in him. As my nature seemed to merge in his, my better self alone was active. The new spirit, which was his influence in me, amounted thus to an obedience to God. Then I saw that I need not count up the sum of my deeds at all. I was dead to the old condition; it had passed away.

Without regard to my defective career, my plus of evil or of good, I had been given the privileges of a son of God. I felt that God accepted this new man, this new condition due to my friend. God was treating me as a good man, though the goodness was not mine but my friend's perfect goodness reigning in me. This simple, heartfelt response to my friend's nature, this self-surrender, this loyalty and gratitude, this faith which was a gift to me—God was taking this in lieu of the sum of individual deeds which I had tried so hard to perform. It was, indeed, my faith and my life, but it was my friend in me. God reckoned this faith for a blameless record, yet it was not a mere formal reckoning of one thing for another. My faith was really goodness, though it was a given goodness, not my creation. I was treated as righteous, and I had really begun to be righteous.

Paul believed that his friend had died to accomplish all this, that he had been exalted to a world above, whence he wrought this work of love, that he gave glimpses of himself in inner visions, and was an abiding inner power and presence through Paul's new faith and new enthusiasm of love. And Paul, as a re-embodiment of the friend who was the unique object of God's love, was heir to the same love and to the deathless triumph conferred upon Christ.

Paul's language is clear and obvious as the outburst of such friendship. The various expressions meet and blend in the glow of this personal relationship, while coldly regarded as formulas for a system of ideas, they fall apart and demand logical effort.

This ardent communion of Pauline faith did not even in the early times perpetuate itself so passionately and so completely. Many apprehended Christ, not in this glowing relation of friendship, but as a revealer of the precepts of duty. There came a time when the manhood which drew such a spiritual response was viewed as impersonal humanity subsumed in the Eternal Logos. But the gospels have restored the friend and the friend is still the power of God for us. Despite all shiftings of theological conception, the Jesus of the gospels is a transforming and abiding experience through whose inward companionship men may experience an influx of God's life. I will love him, said Emerson, as a glorified friend.